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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**FORMER INDIANAPOLIS MAN CHARGED WITH
ESCAPE FROM A FEDERAL PRISON CAMP
AND MULTIPLE FIREARM OFFENSES**

PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that BRENT E. MERRITT, 55, formerly of Indianapolis, Indiana, most recently and currently an inmate of the United States Bureau of Prisons, was indicted by a federal grand jury sitting in Indianapolis for escape and various firearm offenses, including carrying a firearm during and in relation to his escape, possession of 18 firearms and approximately 2400 rounds of ammunition as a convicted felon, and possession of specific firearms (a machine gun, a silencer, and a bolt designed to convert an semi-automatic Uzi pistol into a machine gun) that were not registered to him in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record, following an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the United States Marshals Service, and the United States Bureau of Prisons.

The indictment alleges that MERRITT, was convicted in 1978 of the felony of possession of a silencer and was convicted in 2002 of possession of a firearm by a felon. Both of these convictions were in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana.

On November 8, 2005, Merritt escaped from the Federal Prison Camp in Ashland, Kentucky, where he was serving the sentence of incarceration imposed on his 2002 conviction for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Following his escape, Merritt was found in Marion County, Indiana, carrying a loaded .25 caliber Bauer pistol. Merritt was in possession of 17 additional firearms, including an Uzi semi-automatic pistol, and approximately 2400 rounds of ammunition. The firearms possessed by Merritt included a machine gun and a silencer that were not registered to him in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record. Merritt also possessed a conversion bolt to convert the semi-automatic Uzi pistol into a machine gun. This conversion bolt is considered a machine gun and was not registered to Merritt in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Joe H. Vaughn, who is prosecuting the case for the government, MERRITT faces a maximum possible prison sentence of life imprisonment and a maximum possible fine of \$1.5 million. An initial hearing will be scheduled before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Indianapolis.

The indictment is an allegation only, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at trial or by guilty plea.

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